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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/051,720	01/15/2002	Larry Voss	80121-06551	8993

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EXAMINER

COMSTOCK, DAVID C

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3732

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DATE MAILED: 01/28/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application N .

10/051,720

Applicant(s)

VOSS ET AL.

Examiner

David Comstock

Art Unit

3732

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 November 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 5,7,9,10 and 12-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 5,7,9 and 10 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 12-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 15 January 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 13-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Looney et al. (6,152,874; cited by applicant).

Looney et al. disclose a surgical stabilizer 10' comprising a support structure 14,40,48 attached to a contact member 22,24 including a solid contact surface, i.e., the outer or topmost boundary of the contact member. The contact member includes a textile covering to resist motion and protect the organ (see Fig. 6 and col. 7, lines 32-41). Looney et al. do not disclose rayon, non-woven fibers, etc. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the contact member covering of rayon, non-woven fibers, etc., since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416. It also would have been obvious to form the covering with a thickness in the range of .015 inches - .064 inches, or any such thickness, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

Claims 13-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor et al. (6,036,641; cited by applicant).

Taylor et al. disclose a surgical stabilizer comprising a support structure 2 attached to a contact member 1 that includes a solid contact surface 4 (see Fig. 1 and col. 12, lines 18-23). The contact member includes a foam covering to resist motion and protect the organ (see Figs. 1 and 1b and col. 13, line 57 - col. 14, line 10). Taylor et al. do not disclose rayon, non-woven fibers, etc. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the contact member covering of rayon, non-woven fibers, etc., since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416. It is also noted that foam and textile materials are functionally equivalent means of increasing friction or grip against an organ while protecting the organ (see e.g. Looney et al. (6,152,874), Fig. 6 and col. 7, lines 32-41), which also protects the organ with a covering but uses a textile instead of foam). It would have been further obvious to substitute textile for foam since this amounts to nothing more than the substitution of functionally equivalent means of increasing surface friction, known in the art. It also would have been obvious to form the covering with a thickness in the range of .015 inches - .064 inches, or any such thickness, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

R sponse to Arguments

Applicant's arguments regarding Spence (6,019,722), see page 7, lines 6-13, filed 10 November 2003 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejections of claims 5, 7, 9 and 10 have been withdrawn.

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 12-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5, 7, 9 and 10 are allowed.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment adding the limitation of a contact member having a solid surface necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

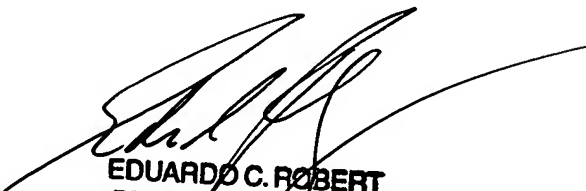
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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David C. Comstock whose telephone number is (703) 308-8514.



D.C. Comstock
24 January 2004



EDUARDO C. ROBERT
PRIMARY EXAMINER